



AXE FACTS

INFO for Owners of Roland & BOSS Guitar Products

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5 MINUTES With Federico Ramos

Federico Ramos is a guitarist whose playing has been described as many things: ethnic jazz, world music, flamenco, Spanish-style, Latin American, and more. Yet this talented Uruguayan-born guitarist gets hired so often to play nylon string, his formidable electric guitar playing sometimes gets overlooked... Until he plugs into his Roland GR-33 Guitar Synthesizer and BOSS GT-3 Guitar Effects Processor, of course.

AxeFacts: For Axe Facts readers who may be unfamiliar with your work, can you fill us in?

Federico Ramos: Well, I specialize in nylon string and its nuances, but I also play electric guitar with artists like Jon Anderson, the lead singer of Yes, with whom I've done five albums and a tour. I also play in a quartet with Yusef Lateef, the Grammy Award-winning saxophone player; we have a project together in February with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. I also do lots of session work, for example, I've just worked with composer Hans Zimmer [*Mission Impossible: 2*, *The Lion King*] on *The Road to El Dorado* soundtrack, and I'm now working with Danny Elfman [*Men in Black*, *Nightmare Before Christmas*, *Batman Returns*] on a new film project called *Proof of Life*.

AF: How would you describe your

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New JS-5 JamStation

THE ULTIMATE PRACTICE & PERFORMANCE PARTNER FOR GUITARISTS

Let's face it. Playing guitar is a lot more rewarding when you've got an incredible band to jam with. Even if songwriting is your goal, it's always helpful to hear your ideas in the context of a full musical arrangement (i.e. drums, bass, keys, etc.) But finding talented musicians who are available at 2 o'clock in the morning and can play the style of music you're working on

can be difficult, if not next to impossible. While you could create your own backing tracks by investing in MIDI sound modules and a sequencer, this requires time and quite a bit of technical know-how. Fortunately, BOSS has come up with an easier



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The BR-8 Essential Tool Kit

Everything You Need to Start Recording on Your BR-8

If you haven't already heard, the BOSS BR-8 Digital Recording Studio is one of the hottest recording products in years. With its onboard effects, Virtual Tracks™, Rhythm Guide, and built-in Zip100 drive, there's not much more you could ask for... except for a footswitch, some headphones and track sheets.

So here you go: the BR-8 Essential Tool Kit—a kit with everything (and we mean everything) you need to get up and running on your BR-8 from day one.



BR-8 Essential Tool Kit contents:

- DP-2 Footswitch for professional Punch-In/Out control
- RH-25 Headphones for high-quality music playback
- Zip100 disk with four JamTracks™ backing/jamming patterns
- Track Sheets for keeping notes on your mixes
- *Making Great Recordings with Your BR-8*, a video covering tips and techniques for recording on your BR-8

playing on these projects?

FR: Well, with a name like Federico Ramos, people expect me to play ethnic and go to the nylon string first. But most of my work is actually pretty eclectic. It doesn't conform to one specific direction. My real background, since I'm from Uruguay, is of course the nylon string guitar. And I lived in Spain for a few years, and so I play some flamenco. But I received my BFA [Bachelors of Fine Arts] in Jazz Guitar at the California Institute of the Arts here in Los Angeles.

AF: And you're currently using some Roland and BOSS guitar gear?

FR: Yes. I'm using the GR-33 Guitar Synthesizer and the GT-3 [Guitar Effects Processor]. These two things have really expanded the possibilities so much. It's a great feeling to know that suddenly you're throwing in string pads or something that can inspire the other players. It's rewarding to have those smiling faces looking back at you.

AF: How did you go from being a nylon-string Spanish-style guitar player to using high-tech guitar gear?

FR: Well, I've always been fascinated with electronic sounds, from my early days with pedals and things. And you know it's funny. I used to use Matchless amps, which I paid a fortune for. But I was in the middle of a production with Geraldo Azevedo, and I had my whole rig with the amps and different studio mics, getting different room sounds. And there was a GT-3 in the studio and I decided to plug in. Once I heard the tone, I told the engineer "Cancel everything! This is it."

AF: And the guitar synths?

FR: Guitar synthesizers have always been a source of interest to me. I started with the GR-50, and then the GR-30. Now, with the GR-33, I feel like I've got so much flexibility in terms of programming. I mean, I can make all these patches for many different applications, whether I'm home writing for different bands or in the studio. I use some of the flute

sounds underneath the guitar sounds, or I'll layer in a grand piano sound. Playing the piano sound forces me to think and play differently. It's totally exciting and inspiring. You have all these possibilities at the touch of a button.

AF: So how are you using the GT-3 now?

FR: Well, I tell you, the GT-3 is amazing. I've been doing this a long time, and to get some of these [GT-3 amp model] sounds in the past, it not only took a lot of expensive gear, but a lot of time and patience. I'm using all kinds of GT-3 preset and custom sounds live, which really influence the way I play... As far as connections, I go from the "Guitar Out" of the GR-33 to the GT-3 and then to my [Roland] KC-300 amps, which are run in stereo. And usually, there's two direct boxes on the stage, and those are my feeds to the PA system.

AF: What advice would you like to share with our *Axe Facts* readers?



FR: As for tips, don't be afraid to experiment. Don't be afraid to do what other people would consider wrong. If the

outcome is going in the right direction, go with it. As for me, I always play with some sort of twist, toward some sort of ethnicity which I have a background in... And it's an exciting time to be playing [Latin] music, in terms of incorporating other world influences, harmonically and melodically, and in terms of concept... These (newer) instruments definitely have a place in this music.

AF: Where can we look for your work in the future?

FR: Well, I'm preparing a record with producer Bob Conti, which features Alphonzo Johnson on bass. I also have a record being released in Spain. It's called *Ritual*, and it's Uruguayan contemporary music. Of course, we do our take on it. I'll also be touring with Yusef Lateef in the early part of next year.

Check out Federico Ramos' music online at <http://listen.to/ramos>.

solution: the JS-5 JamStation. With the JS-5, playing music becomes what it should be—fun! No sequencing required.

Essentially, the JS-5 is a box full of music. It plays four-part arrangements based on 200 different kinds of music. It has familiar styles like Rock, Blues, Dance, Jazz and Country, plus other styles like Ska, Reggae, World, Cumbia, Salsa, and more. Each of these styles has eight variations, or "forms": an intro, two fills, two breaks, two kinds of verses, and an ending. You can use these forms to compose up to 100 of your own songs using these music styles, and store them in the JS-5's massive memory. So if you've ever wanted to play along to a cool reggae groove, but your band doesn't know how to play one, or if you're not even in a band, the JamStation can back you up.

But it gets better: You can put your own chords into the songs and styles of the JS-5 using up to 26 variations. Or, transpose the entire song into a new key and the JS-5 will back you up perfectly and painlessly—something else a live band might not be able to do. In fact, the JS-5 automatically displays the chords of a song with a press of the Chord button, so you can follow along easily.

Want more? The JamStation also has a digital audio track, so you can record your performance and play it back with the music—perfect for practicing, composing, playing live, or just having fun. For example, you could record a rhythm guitar part over a song, then take your JS-5 on a gig and play lead over the JamStation's four internal parts—drums, bass and two other instruments—plus your pre-recorded rhythm guitar. It's like having a five-man band in a simple rockin' box!

And now for the show-stopper...

Like magic, the JamStation can take the recorded audio and change the tempo without changing the key. Why would you want to do that? Suppose, for example, you were using the JS-5 live as a backup band and you had recorded backup vocals so you could sing leads along with your songs. Now suppose the place was rockin' and it seemed like the songs would work better faster. Fortunately, you can just press the Tempo button, turn the Value dial, and the tempo will change. Amazingly, the background vocals you recorded will sync up perfectly to the internal songs at the new tempo and stay in key! Even with a sophisticated sampler, you can't alter the tempo of the samples without changing the key as well. But a JamStation can do it, and in real time!

But what about the sounds? The JS-5 JamStation uses an industry-standard Roland JV-1080 sound engine to create 128 different sounds and 16 different drum kits. It can play drums, bass, and two other parts to back up almost any kind of music. Sounds can be pre-programmed, or even changed on the fly. Parts can be brought in or out of a song just by pressing the JS-5's buttons. So if you're a bass player, for example, and wanted to replace the bass lines with your own, you can just press a button and the bass is out! And talk about ease of use: There is a dedicated button for almost every function in the JS-5 and unsurpassed realtime control—yet another feature a live band probably doesn't have.

So if you're a musician in search of a great-sounding band for jamming, performing live or writing songs, the JS-5 JamStation fits the bill perfectly. And you won't have to deal with the aggravation of finding musicians or tedious MIDI sequencing—just bring along the JS-5 and you're ready to rock!

TIPS & TRICKS

GR-33

Faster Tracking with Play Feel

The Roland GR-33 Guitar Synthesizer has an important feature called Play Feel. Play Feel is a way to set your GR-33 to follow the way you play each of your sounds. For example: suppose you are using a nylon string sound and you want to fingerpick it to make it sound very natural. You can set the GR-33's Play Feel mode for fingerpick and it will track all the nuances of your playing.

Here's how:

1. Press COMMON
2. Press the Right Parameter arrow to select "PLAY FEEL"
3. Rotate the Value dial to select the Play Feel mode you want
4. Press WRITE twice to store the setting

VGA-7

Setting the String Sensitivity

The VGA-7's 26 guitar models sound best if the sensitivity of your guitar is set correctly. Watch the LEDs over



the display. The trick is to get green to light up when you play hard, but not past green into the red. If you're over the green, reduce the level.

Here's how to do it:

1. Press GK
2. Press PARAMETER UP/DOWN to select "5"

3. Play the first string hard and press the Number Up/Down buttons to adjust the sensitivity [0-99]
4. Repeat Step 3 for each of the remaining five strings

GT-3

Great Tone in 30 Seconds

The GT-3 is a very sophisticated digital multi-effects unit with lots of editing parameters. But if you don't have time to spend programming and need a great guitar sound quickly, you can program a great tone in 30 seconds or less.

Here's how:

1. Press EZ-Edit
2. Press TYPE (SFX)
3. Rotate the Value dial to select a basic type of sound
4. Press VARIATION (COMP/LIM)
5. Rotate the Value dial to select a variation of the basic sound
6. Repeat these procedures for DRIVE, TONE, MOD, and DELAY

VG-88

Blending the Direct & Virtual Guitar

The VG-88 can process your normal guitar sound and the modeled guitar sound at the same time; these sounds can even be blended together. However, many of the factory presets are set to play only the virtual guitar sound.

Here's how to increase the normal guitar sound:

1. Set the Selector switch on your GK pickup for MIX
2. Press COSM GUITAR
3. Press PAGE RIGHT twice
4. Press F6 to select "MIXER EDIT"
5. Press F1 to select "BALANCE"
6. Rotate the Value dial counter-clockwise to increase the amount of normal guitar



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Federico Ramos



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- New Guitar Synth & V-Studio Demo Videos

New Guitar Synth and V-Studio Demo Videos!

Roland's new GR-33 Guitar Synthesizer will shoot holes through the notion that guitar synthesis means



compromised response—and one look at the new GR-33 Demo Video will prove it! This video will show you how the GR-33's improved tracking and JV-Series synth engine can turn any GK-equipped guitar into a powerful synthesizer with 350 world-class sounds. You'll also see how its killer onboard effects and cool performance features—like an onboard arpeggiator, Synth Harmonist and an assignable expression pedal—make the GR-33 the best guitar synth in Roland history.

On the recording front, the new VS-890 Demo Video shows you how Roland took the 8-track recording workstation concept into the 21st century by adding pristine 24-bit A/D-D/A converters and a new 24-bit recording mode for unparalleled sound quality. For those unfamiliar with Roland's famed V-Studio lineup, this video will also explain basic V-Studio recording concepts like Virtual Tracks, random access editing and CD mastering and burning using the optional Roland CD Recording System (sold separately).



All Roland demo videos are available for \$5 each (two for \$7.50) by calling the Roland SuperStore at (800) 386-7575 or by visiting the SuperStore section of www.rolandus.com.